



MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH &
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

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BEATING THE HOLIDAY BLUES *TIPS ON MAKING THIS SEASON BRIGHTER*

NASHVILLE—For many individuals, the holiday season is a time for visiting friends, exchanging gifts and simply enjoying the hustle and bustle of shopping malls and seasonal festivities. For others, the season is not so blissful. In fact, it is not uncommon for people to feel down, even depressed during this time, suffering from a condition labeled as the “holiday blues.”

Unlike other forms of depression, the “holiday blues” last only a brief period of time, usually surfacing around Thanksgiving and continuing to New Year’s Day. Three main factors contribute to the onset of holiday depression:

Relationships. Individuals often feel alone or isolated during the holidays for different reasons including separation from loved ones or the loss of a family member or friend. Family issues can often intensify during the holiday season, often times bringing on unwanted conflict. These relationship triggers can also be accompanied by unresolved grief or anger. Also, as people age, they may start feeling more alone as they look back and remember past holidays that were shared with family and friends who may no longer be living close by.

Finances. Purchasing gifts, traveling to different locations and attending several holiday parties may put a large dent in the pocket book that normally would not occur at other times of the year. During the holiday season these increased financial expectations may cause individuals to feel unwanted stress. This year’s issues with the economy, especially the real estate market and gas prices, are added concerns.

Physical Demands. Physical stress may be increased by events such as shopping at overcrowded malls, preparing large dinners and attending several holiday events. Individuals often ignore their healthy lifestyle habits this time of year by indulging in high-calorie holiday foods, slowing down on normal exercise routines, and not attending to personal needs for rest and sleep.

Here are some useful tips to help cope with the holiday as the season begins to unfold:

- Eat a healthy diet and if drinking alcohol, do so only in moderation.
- Exercise and get plenty of rest.
- Implement a budget that is reasonable and preplanned.
- Ask for support of friends and family as well as seek community and volunteer opportunities.
- Relax and let others share some responsibilities for holiday tasks.

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"One key thing to remember is that, if feelings of the blues, sadness, or anxiety persist past the holiday season, please consider contacting a mental health expert or agency as soon as possible as you may possibly be dealing with a more serious condition that should be addressed early," stated Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Commissioner Virginia Trotter Betts. "One resource that may benefit many individuals is their Employee Assistance Program. EAP is a counseling service for employees and their eligible dependents who are experiencing personal or work place problems including, but not limited to, stress, substance abuse, and emotional issues."

For educational materials or additional mental health information please contact the Office of Public Information and Education at (615) 253-4812 or visit www.state.tn.us/mental.

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